



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

PUBLISHED FOR LABOR ACTIVISTS BY THE ILLINOIS AFL-CIO

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The Illinois General Assembly will return next Tuesday, March 9th. Both chambers are scheduled to convene at noon. Governor Quinn will be giving his annual budget address at 12:00pm on Wednesday, March 10th, to a joint session of the General Assembly. Next Friday, March 12th is the deadline for the House to pass substantive House bills out of committee. The Senate will begin taking floor votes on Senate bills next week. The Senate is scheduled to be in session Tuesday through Thursday next week, and the House is scheduled to remain in from Tuesday through Friday.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY NEWS

The Illinois General Assembly met for three days this week. The deadline to pass bills out of Senate committees is today, March 5th. Those bills that did not pass out of a Senate committee will now return to the Committee on Assignments. The following is a sample of the bills that passed this week.

HB 4644 – Pensions

Rep. Poe (R – Springfield)

SUPPORT

Amends the State Universities Article of the Illinois Pension Code. Allows a participant to establish creditable service and earnings credit for periods of furlough beginning on or after July 1, 2009 and ending on or before June 30, 2011.

3/3/10 – Passed House 115-0-1. Referred to Senate Assignments.

HB 4820 – School Bus Driver Records

Rep. William Davis (D – Chicago)

Monitor

Amends the Illinois Vehicle Code and Criminal Code of 1961. Provides that in addition to existing requirements, applicants for a school bus driver permit must not have been convicted of aggravated reckless driving or driving while under the influence of alcohol, other drugs, intoxicating compounds or any combination thereof (current law is driving while intoxicated).

3/4/10 – Passed House 110-1-0. Referred to Senate Assignments.

HB 4873 – School and Commercial Bus Permits

Rep. William Davis (D – Chicago)

Monitor

Amends the Illinois Vehicle Code. Adds several offenses to the list of existing offenses that disqualify a person for a school bus driver permit or a commercial driver's license. Effective immediately.

3/4/10 – Passed House 111-0-0. Referred to Senate Assignments.

HB 5154 - FOIA Trailer Bill

Rep. ChapaLaVia (D - Aurora)

SUPPORT

Amends the Personnel Record Review Act. Provides that disclosure of performance evaluations for all public employees under

the Freedom of Information Act shall be prohibited. Effective immediately.

3/3/10 – Passed State Government Committee 11-2-0. Second Reading.

HB 5664 – Greek House Fire Sprinklers

Rep. Burke (D – Chicago)

SUPPORT

Creates the Greek Housing Fire Safety Act. Provides that in the case of a Greek housing structure (that is, a fraternity or sorority house) the construction of which is begun on or after January 1, 2011, that construction must include the installation of automatic fire sprinkler systems. Provides that in the case of a Greek housing structure construction of which was begun before January 1, 2011, automatic fire sprinkler systems are required in every such structure by January 1, 2019.

3/4/10 – Passed Fire Protection Committee 6-0-1. Second Reading.

HB 5668 – Firefighters

Rep. Dugan (D – Kankakee)

SUPPORT

Amends the Firemen's Disciplinary Act. Adds to the definition of "fireman" a person who is a paramedic employed in a unit of local government and an EMT employed in a unit of local government. Effective immediately.

3/4/10 – Passed Personnel & Pensions Committee 9-0-0. Second Reading.

HB 5956 – Line of Duty Processing

Rep. Dugan (D – Kankakee)

SUPPORT

Amends the Line of Duty Compensation Act. Provides that the person filing a claim for compensation under the Act for a fireman killed in the line of duty shall have access, to all information related to the court's judgment of the claim.

3/3/10 – Passed State Government Com-

mittee 17-0-0. Second Reading.

SB 642 – Public University Borrowing

Sen. Haine (D – Alton)

SUPPORT

SB 642 provides authorization for the governing boards of each public university to borrow money in anticipation of receiving payments from the State of Illinois. Requires these monies to be repaid within 12 months and provides maximum limits.

3/3/10 – Passed Senate 43-14-1. Referred to House Rules.

SB 1425 – Medicaid Borrowing

Sen. Trotter (D – Chicago)

Rep. ChapaLaVia (D – Aurora)

Monitor

Allows the state to borrow \$250 million to pay Medicaid expenses, which will assist the state in capturing \$400 million in federal matching funds.

3/4/10 – Passed Senate 36-20-0. Passed both Chambers. Awaits Governor's signature.

SB 1635 – ATU Pension/Health Care

Sen. Trotter (D – Chicago)

SUPPORT

Allows the Retiree Health Care Trust (RHCT) of the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) to implement cost cutting measures and define eligibility standards for retirees at no cost to taxpayers or CTA customers.

3/4/10 – Passed Senate Executive 8-5-0. Second Reading.

SB 2925 - College/University Registration and Voting

Sen. Frerichs (D - Champaign)

SUPPORT

Amends the Election Code. Requires election authorities to conduct grace period registration,

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grace period voting, and early voting on public university, college, and community college campuses within their jurisdictions. Effective immediately.

3/2/10 – Passed Elections Hearing 5-2-0. Second Reading.

SB 3568 – Wage Payment and Collection
Sen. Delgado (D – Chicago)

SUPPORT

Establishes procedures for an employee who has not been paid the wage the employee is entitled by the Act to recover by filing a claim with the Department or in a civil action, but not both.

3/3/10 – Passed Senate Labor 8-0-0. Second Reading.

SB 3570 – Graduate Assistants

Sen. Forby (D – Benton)

SUPPORT

Amends the Illinois Educational Labor Re-

lations Act to include pre-professional graduate assistants in the definition of educational employees.

Allows for pre-professional graduate employees to be represented for collective bargaining purposes by a majority vote of employees.

3/3/10 – Passed Senate Labor 7-1-0. Second Reading.

SB 3644 – Wage Payment & Collection

Sen. Holmes (D – Aurora)

SUPPORT

Amends the Illinois Wage Payment and Collection Act. Provides that if an employer fails to include all commissions earned by a separated employee in the final compensation paid to the separated employee within the time limit set forth in the Act, the employer shall, in addition to any other penalties, pay the employee an amount equal to 3 times the amount of the commissions that were not paid, as well as the employee's

court costs, attorney's fees, and any other associated costs incurred in successfully pursuing a legal action against the employer. Effective immediately.

3/3/10 – Passed Senate Labor 7-1-0. Second Reading.

HJR 101 – McPier Exposition Task Force
Speaker Madigan (D – Chicago)/President Cullerton (D – Chicago)

Monitor

Creates the Joint Committee on the Metropolitan Pier and Exposition Authority to examine and recommend ways to improve the Metropolitan Pier and Exposition Authority's operational stability and profitability. The task force will consist of sixteen General Assembly members, chaired by Speaker Madigan and Senate President Cullerton.

2/24/10 – Passed House 113-0-0.

3/3/10 – Passed Senate 55-0-1.

Resolution adopted by both chambers.

STATE NEWS

Illinois Top Finalist for “Race to the Top” Education Funding

On Thursday, U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan announced that Illinois is a first-round finalist in the federal *Race to the Top* (RttT) competition for millions of dollars in additional education funding.

Illinois' excellent application and school reform policies positioned the state as a front runner. The Illinois Federation of Teachers (IFT) was a key participant in the process. “IFT efforts on several key pieces of legislation that focused on improved teaching and learning were critical to Illinois' success in this first round,” said IFT President Ed Geppert, Jr.

They include expansion of charter schools and the establishment of needed reforms, development of a statewide longitudinal student data system and improvement of teacher evaluation systems to incorporate student growth as part of the process.

“Gov. Pat Quinn and State Superintendent of Education Chris Koch deserve plaudits for their work in setting the tone for Illinois' RttT application,” added Geppert. “They encouraged all education stakeholders to find common ground to bring about transformational change in the state's education system within the very short RttT time frame.”

IDOL Releases Apprenticeship Audit

On Monday, the Illinois Department of Labor released the first *State Construction Minority and Female Building Trades Annual Report* outlining the makeup of the state's construction apprenticeship programs.

Under the recently enacted *State Construction Minority and Female Building Trades Act (PA 96-0037)*, all construction apprenticeship programs in Illinois are required to submit a report to the Illinois Department of Labor concerning the race, gender, ethnicity and national origin of apprentices participating in their programs. The Department is responsible for publishing and posting on its website an annual report summarizing its findings by March 1st each year.

The report shows 98 percent of all apprentices enrolled are union members. Demographically, 97 percent are male, 15 percent are Hispanic and 8.7 percent are African-American. Comparatively, Illinois' workforce is 53 percent female, 13 percent Hispanic and 13 percent African-American.

The full report can be viewed at www.state.il.us/agency/idol.

Good Report for Taylorville Energy Center

The **Facility Cost Report** for the Taylorville Energy Center (TEC) released on Wednesday shows the plant will create more jobs than previously expected, use more than 1.5 million tons of Illinois coal per year, greatly reduce CO2 emissions and have little effect on consumer electric rates.

The report, mandated by the Illinois **Clean Coal Portfolio Standard Law**, serves as a guide for the General Assembly approval process, providing estimated building costs as well as rate and environmental impact evaluations.

The Taylorville Energy Center, to be built just north of Taylorville, will be the cleanest coal-fueled power plant in the U.S. The report finds the plant will create nearly 2,500 construction jobs and hundreds of permanent plant and mining jobs.

The managing partners for TEC have negotiated a project labor agreement with area unions.





Amy Nixon, IL AFL-CIO Resource Director supports Whirlpool workers at Evansville rally.

Illinois Union Members Rally behind Indiana Whirlpool Workers

Estimated 5,000 join March

Illinois AFL-CIO Resource Director Amy Nixon was one of thousands who marched in solidarity last Friday to support Whirlpool workers in Evansville, IN. Whirlpool recently announced they will close the plant there and move production to Mexico, leaving 1,200 union workers unemployed.

“The crowd was impressive,” said Nixon, who drove from Decatur to join the rally. “I didn’t expect 5,000 people. We definitely made a statement. It was very emotional, very empowering. And I know it meant a lot to the Evansville workers.”

AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka led the march to the Whirlpool plant where he delivered over 70,000 signatures demanding the company stop sending U.S. jobs out of the country. Whirlpool has received over \$19 million in federal stimulus aid.

In 2006, Whirlpool closed the Maytag plant in Herrin and moved 1,200 Illinois jobs to Mexico.

NATIONAL NEWS

Federal Unemployment Benefits Extension Passes

On Tuesday night, the U.S. Senate passed and the President quickly signed legislation to extend unemployment benefits and COBRA subsidies through April 5. As many as 15,000 Illinoisans would have lost their benefits if the bill had not passed, according to the Illinois Department of Employment Security.

Last week, Sen. Jim Bunning (R-KY) singlehandedly blocked the bill angering both Democrats and Republicans in Congress.

The 30-day extension of benefits will keep in place the safety net for long term unemployed workers who are actively seeking work during the Bush recession.

Former AFL-CIO Officer wins Democratic Primary in Texas

On Tuesday, retired National AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson beat two Primary opponents to win the Democratic nomination for lieutenant governor of Texas. She will face millionaire, Republican incumbent David Dewhurst in November.

Chavez-Thompson, who served for 12 years as executive vice president of the AFL-CIO and was an organizer for AFSCME in her home-state of Texas, campaigned on the importance of public education, high school drop out rates and the high cost of college tuition. “I’ve spent my whole career lifting up wages and fighting for better jobs that allow both parents to work and meet their parental responsibilities,” she said.



Bill Brady certified as Winner of Republican Primary

The State Board of Elections certified the results of the February 2, 2010 Primary this morning. In the Republican Primary for Governor, State Senator Bill Brady (R-Bloomington) defeated State Senator Kirk Dillard (R-Hinsdale) by 193 votes out of the more than 750,000 Republican Primary votes cast.

Since being elected to the Illinois House in 1992 and appointed to the Illinois Senate in 2002 Brady has compiled a lifetime AFL-CIO voting record of just 25% in support of Illinois working families. In recent memory alone, Brady voted against funding of the \$31 billion *Illinois Jobs Now!* capital program (HB 255), voted against transparency when school districts privatize jobs (HB1347), voted against employee misclassification (HB1795) and voted against closing eight corporate tax loopholes that left Illinois taxpayers footing the bill (SB 1544).

Brady will face Governor Pat Quinn (D) and Rich Whitney (G) in the November 2, 2010 General Election.

